

Making Your Utility Complaint Count . . .

Steps in Solving Utility Problems

Utility customers have learned to expect good service from electric, natural gas, telephone, and water and sewer companies. But sometimes problems develop between the customer and the utility.

Some problems occur when:

- The utility wants an unexpected or large deposit.
- The bill seems too high.
- You receive a disconnect notice.
- Service is inadequate.

Talk To A Utility Representative

If you have a utility problem, first discuss the situation with someone at the utility. Utility companies have customer service representatives who will try to answer your questions or solve your problem.

The utility should investigate your complaint promptly and it should report the results of its investigation to you. The utility will also try to settle the dispute and, in the event that you are behind on your bill, give you a chance to make a deferred payment arrangement.

Contact the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

If you are not satisfied with the utility's solution to your problem or are unable to come to an agreement regarding your account, contact the Consumer Affairs Unit of the PSC.

Consumer Affairs

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
610 N. Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Consumer inquiries:

Within Madison-

(608) 266-2001

Outside Madison-

1(800) CAL-PSCW (225-7729)

The Consumer Affairs Unit

Consumer Affairs has the responsibility to see that electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and some sewer utilities follow the rules when they deal with customers. The rules prescribe how and when a utility may disconnect your service, how you can get reconnected, when and if a deposit is required, what you can do if you fall behind in your bill payments, and how to dispute a bill.

As soon as the PSC staff receives your complaint, a Consumer Affairs Specialist will review your problem, contact the utility, and attempt to reach a solution that is acceptable to both parties.

The Consumer Affairs Specialist will ask you to describe the problem in detail. You may be asked to send copies of all relevant materials such as bills, letters, or disconnect notices. Then the Consumer Affairs Specialist will investigate, contact the utility if necessary, and get back to you with a decision.

While your problem is under investigation by the PSC or the utility, your service **may not** be disconnected. However, you are required to pay, on time, all charges that are not in dispute.

Quick Tips for Resolving Problems

Here are some suggestions to help you get good results when filing a complaint:

- **Go to the right person.**

First contact a utility customer representative. Calmly state the problem and what action you would like taken. If this person cannot help you, ask to talk to the supervisor. Repeat the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the utility's response, write or call the PSC's Consumer Affairs Unit.

- **Be business-like.**

You will get better results if you avoid the temptation to take out your frustration on the person who may be able to help you. Remember, the person handling your complaint did not cause your problem, but may be able to provide a solution.

- **Have facts ready.**

It is helpful for you to have copies of all bills, receipts, cancelled checks, letters and disconnect notices—everything that supports your claim. If these documents are requested, be sure to send copies—not originals.

- **Keep good records.**

If you write a letter, keep a copy of it for your records. If you file your complaint in person or by telephone, be sure to get the name of the person you talked to. Keep all documents related to your complaint.

Other Customer Services

The PSC regulates Wisconsin’s electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and some sewer utilities. However, most activities of the state’s electric cooperatives, cable television companies, and certain sewer utilities are not under PSC jurisdiction. Fuel oil, propane, and gasoline are not regulated by the PSC either.

If the PSC’s Consumer Affairs Unit cannot help you, perhaps one of the following agencies can give you the answers you need to resolve your consumer complaint:

Electric Cooperative

Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association
30 W. Mifflin Street
Suite 400
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 258-4400

Cable TV

Your city or village cable TV board
(Contact your city clerk for information)

Water Quality

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Private and Public Water Supply
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921
(608) 266-0821

Propane Gas

Wisconsin Department of Justice
Office of Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 7856
Madison, WI 53707-7856
(608) 266-1852

Bilingual Service

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is also able to provide customer assistance in Spanish. When calling the PSC, please ask to speak to a Spanish speaking representative.

Servicio Bilingüe

En la Comisión de Servicios Públicos del estado de Wisconsin (PSC) podemos asistirle en Español. Cuando llame a la PSC, pida hablar con un representante de habla hispana.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services, or employment. If you are speech, hearing, or visually impaired and need assistance, call (608) 266-5481 or TTY (608) 267-1479. We will try to find another way to get the information to you in a usable form.

Fax (608) 266-3957
TTY (608) 267-1479
Consumer Affairs (800) 225-7729
General (608) 266-5481
Email PSCRECS@PSC.STATE.WI.US
Web Site <http://www.psc.state.wi.us/>
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